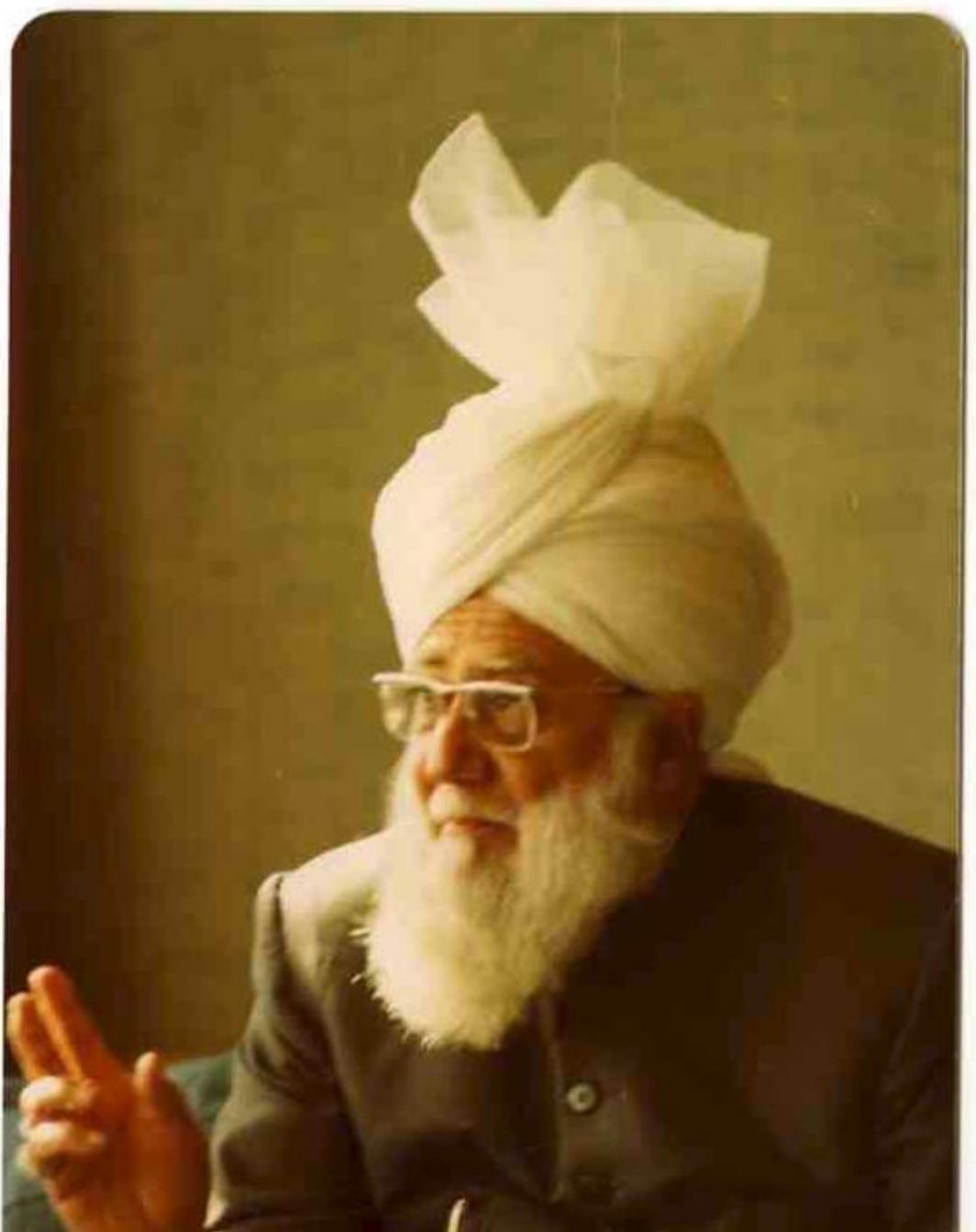


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

A Glimpse into the life of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III



By:

B.A. Rafiq

It is our firm belief that it is Allah Almighty who appoints a Khalifat ul Masih. The appointment of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III, as a Khalifa of the Promised Messiah, was predicted by numerous prophecies revealed to his predecessor, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II. I cite here only a few of these:

"It was disclosed to him that from 1965 a new era of Ahmadiyyat would begin that would indeed relate to the Third Khilafat".

The AlFazal of 8th April 1915 carried a prediction: '*God has also told me that He shall grant me a son who shall be the "NASIR-I-DIN" (i.e. supporter of the Faith and ever-ready to serve Islam).*

At the Annual Gathering of 1965, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II said, "*Whenever the election of the next Khalifa takes place and whoever is duly elected, I wish to give him the glad tidings that God shall favour him with His support and whosoever stands in opposition to him, whether a great man or small, shall face humiliation and ignominy and is bound to suffer ruin and disgrace; because the next Khalifa shall, indeed, walk in the footsteps of the Promised Messiah; and shall uphold and establish the institution of the Islamic Khilafat. Therefore, I give glad tidings now to him who will be elected the Third Successor in my place, even if the governments of the world oppose him, these shall be shattered into pieces*". (Khilafat-i-Haqqa Islam p.17-18)

On the 8th of November 1965, Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II, passed away and Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad was duly elected by the electoral college of the Ahmadiyya Community as the Third Successor, of the Promised Messiah. In his own words he was "*a humble servant of the Almighty Allah*". This modesty hid the fact that he was a Hafiz of the Holy Quran, and had in addition gained his MA at Oxford University. For the last several years he had been the Principal of the Talimul Islam College besides holding a number of other important posts in the Community. Yet, those who really knew him were concerned that he did not have the same gift of eloquence and public speaking that his father had been endowed with. But within a short space of time after elevation to Khilafat he underwent a metamorphosis and established himself as a highly knowledgeable & gifted public speaker. This metamorphosis was another gift from Almighty Allah.

His interests and his knowledge displayed a deep understanding of religion, naturally, and of all worldly subjects ranging from science, economics, to politics, geography and history. All those who met him were impressed with this great spiritual leader and would proudly testify, that in person he was a selfless, loving, beloved, simple and kind-hearted person

The very first international scheme he launched at Rabwah was the Fazl-i-Umar Foundation which was charged with several types of activities in memory of his late father. One of its more ambitious programmes was the institution of scholarships and research awards bestowed annually for outstanding research. Starting with a small fund, this Foundation has now become a prominent feature of our Community, but considerations of space forbid me from going into the details of the present programmes undertaken by the Foundation, which includes the building of a large guest house for visiting Ahmadis at Rabwah.

Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad was the first Khalifa who travelled widely outside the sub-continent of India throughout his Khilafat. This travelling had bridged the gap between the Khalifa and his flock

and had knit the Community together into one unit under a strong Centre. He had made seven trips to Europe—in 1967, 1970, 1973, 1975, 1976, 1978 and 1980.

During his West African tour in 1970, at Gambia, Almighty God instilled into his mind another grand scheme. The people of Africa had for centuries suffered persecution under the yoke of colonialism and it was time to liberate them by illuminating Africa through the divine light of Islam. The Scheme, known as the Nusrat Jehan Scheme, was launched through an announcement made in the Mahmud Hall, London and had been directed towards the establishment of schools, hospitals, clinics and broadcasting stations in Africa. I still distinctly remember when Hazur asked me personally as Imam & Missionary in charge to ensure, that before he left the United Kingdom, a week later, a sum of £10,000.00 should be raised for the scheme. Knowing fully the financial ability and position of the U.K. Community, I frankly admitted the hopelessness of the mammoth task and said that I felt, that the target could not be achieved. Huzur told me that this was a divine mission and that Allah would ensure its success. Anyway, the UK Jamaat made their modest efforts and lo and behold those people of whose financial sacrifices I had some apprehension began to pay in their contributions. By the end of the week, (and before Huzur departed), I reported to Huzur that the sum of £10,000 had been deposited in the bank. This three-year scheme went on to an accumulated fund of more than £50,000 within a short space of time & with the greater part of the sum pledged by the U.K. community. Countless schools, colleges, clinics and hospitals have been opened in Africa and many qualified teachers; doctors and dentists are operating on the African continent even to this day under the auspices of the Nusrat Jehan Scheme that was launched from Mahmud Hall, London those many years ago. His Excellency, The High Commissioner of the Gambia in the U.K. openly admitted to me the success of the Nusrat Jehan Scheme and often said that the day was drawing near when the whole of the country in some way or the other would receive some benefit from this excellent scheme.

In the coming years the financial resources of the community were to be further tested. At the 81st Annual Conference of the community held at Rabwah in 1973, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III announced another grand project which would set in motion a programme of the progressive development of all the branches of the Movement, speed up the propagation of Islam in all parts of the world and bring closer the prevalence of Islam throughout. The fifteen year scheme known as the Ahmadiyya Centenary Scheme was charged with establishing more missionary centres in various countries around the globe, the translation and publication of the Holy Quran and other Islamic literature in diverse languages, the establishment of printing presses, broadcasting stations and amateur-radio amongst many other projects. Many older members of the jamaat at the launch of the scheme said that the launching of the scheme had rejuvenated them and had given them a reason to live to see the fulfilment of the Centenary Scheme.

It is fairly easy to draw up a list of such grand projects but if the youth of today were to learn anything from the life of their spiritual Head, then they needed to look at the personality that had caused this new era to dawn upon them.

In 1945, I was a student at the T.I. High School in Qadian. I had the privilege of having a glimpse of Hadhrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad, for the first time there. He was then the Sadar (President) of Khuddamul Ahmadiyya Association. As a young Khadim I had the honour of listening to his speeches

at meetings held at the Khuddam Head Quarter in Qadian. I also attended Annual Ijtimas of Khuddamul ahmadiyya at Qadian and later on in Rabwah under his dynamic leadership as the Sadder (President). However, from the early part of 1949 when I joined the T.I. College in Lahore , a strong, loving and benevolent relationship began. He was then the Principal of the College and in those days the T.I. College was at its zenith. Due to his excellent administration, in many ways, the T.I. College had surpassed all other colleges in Lahore .

In later years, it was my privilege to work for Huzur as his Private Secretary during my stay in Pakistan and I can present here a small glimpse of his busy life. Some of his attributes I have already mentioned.

His normal working day began very early in the morning when he prayed and studied in his own modest quarters. Huzur would attend his office each day and read all his mail, making notes for replies, with some letters being answered in his own handwriting. He then would examine reports and issue fresh instructions on multifarious community matters. In addition to this he granted audience to all those who came to see him, and also would lead the prayers in the Mosque. The sheer size of his daily mailbag was simply staggering. Having attended to all that mail personally, in addition to other duties that would exhaust any human being, Huzur maintained a cheerful demeanour and never once complained about his heavy workload. Huzur cherished that devoted labour and cheerfully bore the burden of leading a very large and expanding community.

It would be difficult to conceive that he would have any time left over for any other interests. Yet Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad had great enthusiasm for sports & recreation. Under his auspice ran the All-Pakistan Nasir Basketball Competition. On numerous occasions he had urged members to take an interest in cycling, horse riding, and catapult shooting, rowing and swimming. He was such a keen lover of horses that even other seasoned equestrians had expressed amazement at his knowledge of breeding and matters related to the welfare of horses. Huzur was also a keen amateur photographer and in this field too he could match his knowledge about cameras and photography with other expert photographers.

Anyone who loves Allah loves nature's creation. Huzur was no exception. He was simply immersed with the love of nature, its natural phenomena and with the laws of nature. Delivering a discourse on nature came naturally to him. He knew details about the life of the honeybee and its activities that a honey collector would cherish. In his modest home, there was a duck pond and he was also a keen gardener. His talks and his sermons abound with scientific knowledge and he drew attention to Allah Almighty's immense bounties. He had instituted the giving of an annual award on research in nature. In addition he encouraged the inhabitants of Rabwah to take early morning strolls and other healthy outdoor pursuits.

Above all, Huzur was a masterly scholar on the teachings of the Holy Quran. His speeches were acclaimed as rivers of knowledge overflowing their banks. He could take a simple verse from the Holy Quran and explain it so lucidly that the audience were left in awe at the tremendous knowledge that he had of Islam. Such was our spiritual leader, a man under whom anyone would be proud to serve. During the Pakistan crisis of 1974 he had been a source of great comfort to the whole jamaat and held the helm of the ark steady. The serenity with which he endured the barrage of abuse hurled at him by his opponents proved that he was no ordinary man, but was indeed Allah's humble and protected servant.

Signs of acceptance of prayers

Ever since the commencement of his Khilafat Hazrat Khalifatul Masih had been blessed with the sign of his prayers being accepted by Allah Almighty and to prove this, numerous examples could be quoted. Hundreds of people in various countries had requested supplications on their behalf whilst they had been anxious or worried or were involved in legal cases and by the grace of God, their problems were made lighter for them. For many childless couples, he predicted the birth of a child and thus brought happiness to many families.

In his speech delivered at the Annual Gathering in Rabwah on 26th December, 1974, he remarked:

"The bitter atrocities felt personally by the members of the community as a result of their faith cumulated in me. During those days, there came certain nights when, by the Grace and Mercy of Allah Almighty, I did not sleep for a minute without praying throughout for the members of the community".

At another occasion, he said:

"I pray a lot and by the Grace of Allah, He accepts my supplications. This is the biggest proof of His existence that He listens to prayers and responds to it. But it needs to be remembered that merely because He accepts more of a person's prayers should not make that person arrogant or proud. It is insane to feel proud merely because an individual's prayers are accepted. When Allah accepts someone's prayers out of His Mercy, then that someone should display modesty and humility".

He added:

"Once I was agonized with pain which persisted for several days. One day, I prayed, 'My Lord, Thou hast charged me with a grand mission. I am in poor health. Please grant me strength to fulfil this obligation'. After this prayer, I took a homeopathic medicine lying in front of me. Immediately thereafter, God Almighty relieved the agonizing pain. Good health is indeed only granted by God Almighty". (Alfazal, 1971)

During the 1967 tour, he addressed the Annual Conference of the United Kingdom Ahmadiyya Community and said:

"I often pray in the sajda (a position of prostration adopted during prayers). I pray 'O Allah, in respect of those who have written to me, please relieve them of their anxiety, sickness or worries about their examinations. In respect of those who wanted to write to me but could not, please shower Thy Mercy on them as well. And please show mercy on those who become averse or lazy'. I say this prayer because I have a relationship with everyone and deep in my heart lays love and affection for all. Within this short period, Allah through His Grace fulfilled their needs through my humble supplications. The people on whose behalf my prayers were accepted belonged everywhere, here and in Africa".

I now quote some examples that I was personally witness too as proof of the acceptance of Huzur's prayers so that readers may enhance their faith of Almighty Allah.

When Hazrat Khalifatul Masih came to England in 1967, I vacated the Mission House and moved with my family to another flat. This flat was not yet ready and my wife had to clean it every day. As a result, there was a considerable amount of dust in the air. My elder daughter, Jamila, suffered from asthma ever since childhood. Because of the change of environment and the floating dust in the air, my daughter had a severe attack of asthma, but as I was busy with Huzur, I could not attend to her needs. She continued to worsen in health and finally had to be admitted into hospital. A couple of days later I had the opportunity to visit her in hospital. I saw her in an oxygen tent in very poor health and was told by the staff that her condition was worsening daily. In her condition, I wonder if she knew I was there at all. When I consulted the doctor on call, I was told in muted words that there was no response to medicine administered and there was a 50-50 chance of her survival. In fact, the doctor was preparing me for the worst. Full of grief, I returned to the Mission-House where Huzur was busy with his correspondence. I slipped in a note about my daughter's condition and later admitted that there was very little hope of her survival. Huzur immediately comforted me and said he would pray. The next day, Begum Sahiba, the wife of Huzoor, informed me that Huzur had not slept that night and had continued to pray for Jamila throughout the whole night. When that evening I went to the hospital, I was truly amazed to see my daughter sitting on a chair. The doctor told me that her survival was indeed a miracle. Within a few days she was fully recovered and was discharged from the hospital.

A member of the jamaat from Germany once came to Rabwah for audience with Huzur while I was his Private Secretary. During my presence, this member requested prayers for the missionary-in-charge of Germany, Mr. Masood Ahmad Jhelmi Sb, so that he may be blessed with a son. After a few minutes silence Huzur said, "God shall grant a son to Jhelmi Sb, Inshallah. I propose that his name be Luqman Ahmad". Sometime later, on 21st June, 1971, a cable was received from Jhelmi Sb. which read 'ALHAMDOLILLAH, FRUIT OF HUZUR'S PRAYERS LUQMAN BORN'.

From West Africa, a lady wrote that she had been married for 37 years but was childless and she requested him prayers on her behalf. She admitted in her letter that she had reached an age where it was difficult to conceive a child. Huzur prayed for this lady and by the Grace of God, his prayers were accepted. In the fortieth year of marriage, she conceived and gave birth to a son. When Huzur went to Ghana this lady remained with Begum Sahiba throughout, merely out of devotion.

In 1971, Mr. Nazir Ahmad Bajwa of Sahiwal was arrested. Huzur prayed a great deal for him. One night he heard a voice saying "Acquitted". A few days later, this gentleman's wife came to see Huzur and requested prayers so that her husband may be released on bail. Huzur replied, 'God Almighty has given me the glad tidings of his acquittal. Do not worry, he shall be freed'. On 10th January, 1972, a cable was received from Sahiwal stating that Mr. Bajwa had been honorably acquitted. When I presented this cable to Huzur he said, 'I already knew that he was going to be acquitted'.

Mr. Abdulla Auda is a very righteous Ahmadi who came for audience with Huzur during his 1967 tour to London and requested prayers for a son. Huzur prayed and by the Grace of God, he was granted two sons, one after the other. The letter written by Mr. Abdulla which I presented to Huzur reads:

"Huzur obliged me by praying for a son for me and with prayers you comforted me with assuring words. This was at the time when I visited Huzur in London. As a result, God granted me a son in 1968. His name is 'Khalid Mahmud'. In 1970, God granted me a second son whom we have named 'Zafrella'".

For ten years, Mr. Muhammad Sharif Khalid (Frankfurt) & his wife, had no child. A complicated operation was advised and Mr. Khalid wrote to Huzur asking for prayers and counsel regarding the operation. Huzur advised against the operation and said Allah will show His Grace. Top experts from Germany suggested that the possibility of a child being born was only 1% and that the longer the operation was delayed, even that 1% likelihood will be removed. Huzur prayed and as a result the lady conceived. In May 1971, Mr. Khalid visited Huzur in Pakistan and asked for a name to be suggested for a boy and a girl so that the name may be registered immediately after birth. Huzur replied, 'I suggest the name 'Khola' for the daughter on the condition that when she grows up you will teach her horse-riding so that by virtue of her name she might become a likeness of Hazrat Khola! (Hazrat Khola was a companion of the Holy Prophet, SAW and was a great rider.)

On 8th June 1971, Mr. Khalid was blessed with a daughter and his letter read:

"Huzur will be pleased to learn that as a result of your prayers, God Almighty has granted us with a very sweet daughter. I believe that this is purely as a result of Huzur's prayers as otherwise four specialists from Germany had concluded with 99% certainty that, my wife could not conceive. Today, ten years after our marriage, God has granted this happiness to us"

These are but a few examples of the acceptance of Huzur's prayers in cases in which I have directly or indirectly been a witness of. Every member of the community could recall many more examples where an apparently lost cause had reached successful completion because of the prayers offered on their behalf by our beloved leader.

Those who appeared to be in darkness saw light, those who were sick recovered, those who had doubts about success in their exams were reassured, childless couples were blessed with happy issues, the accused involved in legal wrangling became honourably discharged, all as a result of his prayers. For them, they drew comfort from the fact that no earthly reason existed for the outcome but that of the unseen Hand of God at work, and that Hand, they believed was set to work as a result of prayers uttered by their Leader. Their faith in the Powers of Allah increased, their devotion to their spiritual leader remained unquestioned. It would be vain to move them from their entrenched belief, and, after all, only he who experiences this power could attest to its existence for others, darkness remains a bleak reality.

Dislike of Shirk

Huzur had a strong dislike for shirk (faith in the plurality of God). Both in his speeches and while in company with others, he kept reminding members to refrain from this deadliest of all sins. Once an Ahmadi asked him to prescribe some medicine for him. He prescribed some homeopathic medicine. A few days later the Ahmadi returned to report that no improvement had taken place. Huzur said that God Almighty had placed certain characteristics in herbal plants that acted as a remedy for certain ailments. But after placing these specific characteristics in plants, God does not become

separated. Whenever someone takes medicine, God directs the components to reveal their healing qualities to that person and in someone else's case direct that the qualities lay hidden. For the latter, there is no remedy in that medicine and the prescription becomes useless in that case. Hence, for every act, it must have the permission of God Almighty. This is why faith should be placed in God and not in medicine. Medicine is an aid and to depend on it alone is equivalent to Shirk.

Love for the community

Huzur loved all humanity but as members of the community were closer to him, his affection was unreserved for his jamaat. For the young and the old, the healthy and the weaker members, the rich and the meek and the new converts and those who had been Ahmadis by birth his love was unqualified. It was the warmth of his glowing personality and his ever-loving nature, which endeared all those who came into contact with him.

I was a witness to countless examples of selfless and unbridled love for jamaat members. In particular as his Private Secretary I had been a witness to many occasions practically every day when Huzur had granted an audience in spite of his weakness or ill health. He had no care for his comfort or for food. His only desire appeared to be to meet his beloved community members and to comfort and console them with his audience. At times, such official engagements lasted from early morning to three or four in the afternoon. From his household poured constant reminders that food was being served but he ignored such calls till he had met everyone.

When private audience was granted to individuals, he was the last one to bid farewell. Even when it came to a mere handshake, Huzur had kind words to say to everyone. One quick glance rekindled his memory and he would not only recall the name of every single individual in the family but would also even state his or her present occupation.

The very young members of the community would always remember meeting Huzur because for them he had a fatherly love and whether it be a cuddle or an affectionate kiss, the young become attracted to his cheerful personality. He was often heard to remark that he loved meeting the very young members because they were the architects of our future hopes.

I once overheard it being said by certain members of the community that the community should be grateful to Allah Almighty that they had a leader who freely granted audience. They remarked that the Pope only stands by his window and showers his blessings from there to the people gathered below, but that they were truly lucky to belong to a community whose size at the moment is such that the Khalifa met them personally.

Preaching merely for the sake of Allah

Once a doctor sent to Africa under the Leap Forward Nusrat Jehan Scheme wrote to Huzur that there was a possibility of African countries nationalizing the hospitals and clinics established by the Community. Huzur asked me to write to this doctor and tell him that, "*We would be greatly pleased to see our African brothers standing on their own feet. Whenever they could look after schools and hospitals, we would invite them to manage our schools, colleges and hospitals. We had opened these schools and hospitals for their welfare. We seek no monetary or political return on our investment.*

We had entered this field of missionary work merely to seek blessings from Allah by serving His beloved people!"

We have a very modern secondary school at Kumasi in Ghana. A few years ago, this school was taken over by the Government and under the Africanisation policy it was announced that the school would be put under the charge of an African headmaster. At that time the headmaster and the majority of his staff had been sent from Pakistan. Upon the publication of this news, I learnt that some of the staff members and certain other Ahmadis were apprehensive about their future. I remember Huzur saying with great conviction that we were very pleased to learn that the people of Ghana were at last able to manage our school. Our purpose was in fact to reveal the treasure of knowledge and uplift educational standards in Africa. Hence, instead of being apprehensive about the future, we should be pleased with the Ghanaian people. Thereafter, the post for a headmaster was advertised in the papers and a very righteous African Ahmadi was selected by the education authorities as headmaster for this school.

Hazur would say that *"our objective is to serve a people who for almost a century had lived in slavery and bondage under the yoke of colonialism and whose rich cultural heritage had been plundered by the quick profiteer. Our endeavours are unstintingly sincere because we seek neither praise, nor monetary gain nor political influence. When a community enters with such a purpose, it faces no defeat".*

During his tours of African countries once he said that, "I reminded the loving African people that for the past fifty years the Community had engaged itself in serving humanity and never had any money been taken away from them to be sent abroad. Whatever we received in voluntary contributions and school fees had been ploughed back into further prospects for serving you".

Generosity

I was personally witness to the fact that every month Huzur gave away many thousands of rupees to worthy causes. Again, from his own pocket, he gave away to thousands of people expensive medicine that they were unable to buy themselves. A medicine manufactured from Ginseng according to his own formula at a great cost was given away absolutely free to thousands of people. Ahmadis from overseas countries brought vitamin tablets to give him as a gift. He received these with one hand and gave away to needy people with the other.

A missionary once complained to him that the Anjuman had refused to pay a few hundred Rupees due to him. Huzoor forwarded the application to Sadar Anjuman Ahmadiyya for necessary action. The Anjuman wrote back that in accordance with the Rules and Regulations no amount was payable to the missionary concerned. On perusal of the report, Huzoor gave me six or seven hundred Rupees. He instructed me to explain to the missionary that Anjuman was bound by their own Rules and Regulations. Therefore, he was advised to withdraw his claim and accept from Huzoor the amount that he had claimed, as a gift. Accordingly, the whole amount was paid to the missionary concerned. Often when either a son or a daughter of a missionary or a Devotee of Life would get married, he would send for me, put a reasonable amount of money in an envelope and instruct me to deliver it, on his behalf. The cash enclosed in the envelope used to be in the thousands. The

gratification that he derived from these gifts is beyond description. He strictly adhered to what had been enjoined in the Hadeeth, '*He who does not show gratitude to others does not show gratitude to Allah*'.

He also advised Ahmadis to show gratitude to God. Once he gave some medicine to an Ahmadi and asked him to use it with pure honey. The recipient said that it was very difficult for him to obtain pure honey. Huzur said to him,

"I am prepared to give you pure honey on the condition that for every spoon that you use you will express gratitude to the Almighty 2,000 times. As in accordance with a Divine command 2,000 bees work hard to collect a spoonful of honey. These bees derive nectar from flowers in an area of a mile and a half. It is in this way that a clear, pure, aromatic, life giving, naturally sweetened honey is prepared. It is therefore incumbent upon us that we should remain engaged in thanking Allah for His gifts. While consuming every single drop of honey we should recall Allah's blessings in that He has, of His own Mercy and Grace, instructed hundreds and thousands of bees to prepare syrupy honey for us."

On eating less

Huzur himself ate very little. During an audience he once remarked that the people ate much more than what they really needed. As a result, not only did the whole nation suffer from food shortage but also the people themselves ruined their health. A secret of good health was to eat less, he used to say. He once said that a doctor examined him 'and as a remedy prescribed that in the morning he should limit himself to a roti of two chattanks'. (A roti is Indian bread rolled flat and about the size of a half-plate; a chattank is an Indian measure of about 2 ounces). Huzoor said, 'I assigned someone the duty of making a roti from two- chattanks of flour but the next morning was surprised to be served with four roti made of two chattanks instead of the customary two I had'.

"Our household had a tendency to eat less. This is probably because the Promised Messiah fasted continuously for six months. This continuous decrease in eating less and less everyday had reached a stage when the food he had was a mere token and it was the effect of that which manifested itself in the rest of the household as well', said Huzur.

He often said that the root cause of ill health is over indulgence. He would say that a believer is he who eats very little. He related that once; he was a guest of a (zamindar) landowner. For his meal he was given seven chapattis (flat bread) with some saalan (curry). As was his habit, he ate very little. The landowner's wife was watching him from behind a curtain. Impudently she said: "Today you must not eat like you eat at home. You should eat as much as I would like you to." Huzoor smiled and

assured her that he that he was accustomed to eating less out of choice, and not out of any prohibition.

He had also observed that Arab horses ate less than other breeds of horses yet they were more energetic than all other breeds combined.

A lover of nature

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III had always been impressed by the wonders of nature. He said that he studied nature because its study was evidence of the truth contained in the Holy Quran.

He recalled that during the time of the Musleh Mauood, the Promised Son and Khalifatul Masih II, some members had been punished and a member of the community came to see Huzur. He expressed his surprise that such recalcitrant members existed in our community. Huzur stated that he took this member outside to a nearby eucalyptus tree. The tree had some withered branches, yet it was otherwise evergreen. Huzur asked this gentleman whether these branches showed signs of life or death. The gentleman admitted that he then understood this philosophy. Huzur added that every living tree had certain dead wood but in essence a tree was judged by the strength of its roots. There were similar members in the community; although admittedly they numbered but a few, they were nonetheless there. They resembled the deadwood.

He once said that when he read in the Holy Quran:

"He knows whatsoever is in the land and in the sea; not a leaf falls but He knows it". (6:60), he decided to be a witness to this act of God.

Huzur said:

"I went to the garden and selected certain leaves on a tree. Some were very green while others had turned ochre red and were about to fall. I observed these leaves daily but I was very surprised to note that during the night some green leaves had fallen while the withered leaves still remained affixed to the tree. This observation created a firm belief in my heart of the truth of the Holy Quran because it would have been logical if the withered leaf were to fall but the contrary took place. This fact upheld the claim that whatever takes place on this earth, does so according to a divine decree!"

Another example quoted by Huzur was that when it rained on farms, certain crops might be destroyed whilst others remained unaffected. Now according to the common concept of nature, the farms had the same downpour of rain but for certain crops, God Almighty created a shield and protected them from destruction. As such, the laws of nature were subjected to Divine decree.

He was such an avid enthusiast of nature that once he came to learn that a tenant had cut all trees at his house. Huzur was deeply aggrieved to learn about this. Huzur said that quite apart from their national and asthetic values, Islam had forbidden the chopping down of trees. When the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was about to enter a battle, one of his instructions was that trees should not be damaged and that whichever territory was conquered, the responsibility for safeguarding the trees should be on the victors.

Huzur loved flowers and in particular the rose. He was a keen gardener and engaged in this pastime everyday. In his house there were numerous varieties of roses and he closely supervised these

plants. On one of his lands, he had planted an orchard of various kinds of fruit trees. He said that the Holy Quran speaks of gardens having every species of trees and as such he wished to experiment growing them in his garden.

Quite apart from gardening, he was very knowledgeable about horses, bees and other animals. He could keep the most learned expert on these subjects utterly amazed with his mastery of these topics.

He remained continuously engaged in the observation of natural phenomena. His speeches are dotted with hundreds of such examples where he refers to observation of natural phenomena. He once said that in the Holy Quran the Almighty says:

"And there falls not a leaf but He knows it." 6:60.

Personal Anecdotes

In 1945, I was a student at the T.I. High School in Qadian. I had the privilege of having a glimpse of Hadhrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad, for the first time there. He was then the Sadar (President) of Khuddamul Ahmadiyya Association. As a young Khadim I had the honour of listening to his speeches at meetings held at the Khuddam Head Quarter in Qadian. I also attended Annual Ijtimas of Khuddamul Ahmadiyya at Qadian and later on in Rabwah under his dynamic leadership as the Sadder (President). However, from the early part of 1949 when I joined the T.I. College in Lahore, a strong, loving and benevolent relationship began. He was then the Principal of the College and in those days the T.I. College was at its zenith. Due to his excellent administration, in many ways, the T.I. College had surpassed all other colleges in Lahore.

I was the Imam of the London Mosque when Hadhrat Khalifa tul Masih II passed away in 1965. Thousands of miles away from the Centre, all Ahmadis in Britain were impatiently waiting for the news of the election of the third Khalifa. Many Ahmadis had assembled in the Mission House in London.

A very pious and devoted British Ahmadi Muslim, Bilal Natal, approached me and told me that he knew who the next Khalifa would be. I was very surprised. I asked him, how he knew, ahead of the election, the person who would be chosen to be the new Khalifa. Bilal Natal gave me a photograph that he had in his hand and in a choking voice said: *"Here is a photograph of Sahibzada Mirza Nasir Ahmad, taken in the garden of the London Mosque. In those days, he was up at Oxford for his studies. Whenever he used to come to London I used to be close to him and spent time with him. I found him to be God fearing, well mannered and an arch lover of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, s.a.w. After my first glimpse at him I had always been absolutely certain that he deserved to occupy the exalted position and that the Jamaat would surely elect him."* Bilal Natal was still with me when we received a telegram from the Centre giving the glad tiding that Hadhrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad had been elected as the third Khalifa. Bilal Nuttal, being far sighted saw in Huzur all the qualities that were required for the fulfilment of the monumental task as a Khalifa. He was a witness that Huzur

was a chaste, pious and God-fearing person. He was also a witness that he was an arch lover of the Holy Prophet of Islam.

Many members of the family of the Promised Messiah had a close relationship with a British farming family in Cornwall (England) The Pearce family were well to do and had a farm called *Trenodden* near Liskeard. While Huzoor was a student at Oxford , he would often spend his holidays at the farm. His cousins Mirza Muzaffar Ahmad (M.M.Ahmad) and Mirza Zafar Ahmad, also accompanied him.

Once, along with Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, I also spent a few days at the farm. In the evenings at the dinner table Mrs. Pearce would repeat the old tales concerning the times the three grandsons of the Promised Messiah had spent at the farm. Once during the course of our conversation, Mrs Pierce enquired about Hadhrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad. She was told that he was now the Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement. She pointed to the room where he used to stay and said that whenever she passed in front of his room she could hear a fascinating hum. She would stand next to the window and hear what was being recited. Once she asked Nasir about it. He replied that he recited a portion of the Holy Quran every morning. Mrs Pearce also said that at the evening meals the grandsons of the Promised Messiah often talked about their future plans. When it was Nasir's turn, he would say:

"I intend to serve Islam and I am determined to devote my life for this purpose. I have no other desire or ambition and I am certainly not inclined towards worldly affairs."

Normally the British, are somewhat diffident about talking about matters of faith. Mrs. Pearce admitted that on hearing this discussion she said: *"Oh! What a waste of time."* She continued: *"Now that he was the Head of the Jamaat I feel sorry that I let such a remark escape from my lips. Indeed, he had been granted the kind of life that he had wished for. Even in his youth he was very shy and a very affectionate person. During his holidays, he would assemble children and would give them chocolates. He was very particular in eating only Halal meat and as Halal meat was not easy to come by he would arrange for Halal meat himself from amongst the farm animals"*

In 1967 Huzoor visited Denmark for the Inauguration Ceremony of the Ahmadiyya Mosque in Copenhagen. I was also present there. I saw Huzoor for the first time after his election to the office of Khilafat. When I cast my eyes on his countenance I had a very strange sensation. With great compassion & love, he embraced me and allowed me to stay with him for a while.

A few days later, when he travelled to England, all of us in the British Jamaat were very happy and over the moon. At Queen's Building , Heathrow Airport a modest stage had been arranged for his reception and a microphone had been provided. On his arrival, the building resounded with slogans of 'Takbeer' and other Islamic slogans. I asked him if he would like to address the audience. He said that he was so impatient to meet the members of the Jamaat that he would like to shake hands with all those who were present. No plans had been made for shaking of hands and certain difficulties arose. However, he insisted and shook hands with all the Ahmadis who had assembled there to receive him. He even embraced some of them. He had to remain on his feet for an hour and a half but his face was aglow with pleasure, on meeting Ahmadis.

At every step during this tour the British Jamaat witnessed signs of the acceptance of his prayers. While in Scotland, he asked a devout Ahmadi, Muhammad Ayub about his children. He answered that he had three daughters. Huzoor smiled and said: "It is high time you had a son." In a despondent manner, Mr Ayub said: "Now I cannot hope for a son." In a very firm tone, Huzoor told him that it was a sin to be despondent and that it did not behove a believer to be pessimistic. Then he promised to pray for him and said that, God willing, he would have a son. A little later Mr Ayub wrote to him and advised him that his wife was pregnant and asked him to pray that they may be blessed with a son. In reply, Huzoor assured him that the Almighty would grant him a son and asked him to name the child 'Ibrahim'. This letter from Huzoor was written four or five months prior to the birth of the boy. Mr. Ayub brought the letter to me. I congratulated him. On the due date, a son was born and he was named 'Ibrahim'.

Similarly, Sadiqa Haidar, a devout Ahmadi lady, living in London started crying bitterly when she met Huzoor. When asked the reason Sadiqa said that she had no children and that the topmost specialists in London had told her that it was not possible for her to bear any children. In a very firm tone, Huzoor said to her: - *Our faith is based upon the living and sustaining God and not upon any Doctor. I will pray for you. Do not despair. The Almighty Allah will show His Mercy and Grace.*" A little later Sadiqa told him in her letter that she was pregnant but that the doctors felt that she would miscarry. Huzoor gave her the glad tidings of the birth of a boy, and assured her that she would not miscarry. The Almighty accepted his prayers. He had been gifted with a special sign; i.e. acceptance of his supplications.

In personal characteristics he was kindness personified. He would become restive at the slightest problem faced by those around him.

In May 1971 when I had the honour and privilege of being his Private Secretary, the routine was that he met his visitors once during the day. A large number of people would assemble to meet him. According to the schedule, the meetings were to begin at 11 a.m. Once at around 10 a.m. he suffered about of extreme weakness. A doctor was called to examine him. The doctor strictly prohibited him from meeting any visitors and instructed him to take complete rest. Huzur said that since some members of the Jamaat had travelled a long distance to meet him, it was not possible for him to disappoint them and send them away without meeting him. The doctor suggested that Huzur should only shake hands with the visitors and should not indulge in any conversation with them. He started meeting the visitors and in fact, after shaking hands he started to converse with every one of them. Signs of weakness were apparent on his face and one could clearly see that he was unwell. Nevertheless, he met the visitors and only retired after having seen all of them.

He himself used to glorify Allah all the time. He also advised Ahmadis to show gratitude to God. Once he gave some medicine to an Ahmadi and asked him to use it with pure honey. The recipient said that it was very difficult for him to obtain pure honey. Huzoor said to him,

"I am prepared to give you pure honey on the condition that for every spoon that you use you will express gratitude to the Almighty 2,000 times. As in accordance with a Divine command 2,000 bees work hard to collect a spoonful of honey. These bees derive nectar from flowers in an area of a mile and a half. It is in this way that a clear, pure, aromatic, life giving, naturally sweetened honey is prepared. It is therefore incumbent upon us that we should remain engaged in thanking Allah for His gifts. While consuming every single drop of honey we should recall Allah's blessings in that He has, of His own Mercy and Grace, instructed hundreds and thousands of bees to prepare syrupy honey for us."

I had the privilege of being a recipient of his continuous kindness, affection and love for a period of seventeen years of his Khilafat. Because of his kindness and love every single particle of my body prays that in the next world Allah Almighty would grant him the proximity of his master, Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa (saw) Ameen.

I was also privileged to be included in his entourage whenever he toured Europe and America . Whilst in America , I also served as his Private Secretary. For a long time I had become accustomed to drinking coffee every morning at 11 a.m. Sir Zafrullah Khan was aware of this habit of mine. On his visit to Scotland, I was asked to drive Huzur's car. Sir Zafrullah Khan also accompanied us. Before leaving London, in an aside he jokingly asked me: "*How will you manage to have a cup of coffee now at 11 o'clock while Huzur would be in the car?*" Responding in the same spirit of jest I said that God does arrange to procure what one is habituated to. He laughed at my response. On our way from London to Scotland , a quarter of an hour before 11 o'clock I saw a sign board for 'Services'. I slowed down and signalled to turn left off the motorway. Huzur enquired as to why I was leaving the motorway. I said that right ahead were Services where we could make use of the washing facilities and stretch our legs. He liked the idea and said that he himself wanted to get out of the car and visit the amenities. Sir Zafrullah Khan chuckled and said to me: "*Somehow you have managed to stop for your coffee at 11 o'clock!*" We laughed. On hearing us laugh, Sir Zafrullah Khan told Huzur that Imam Sahib was in the habit of drinking coffee at 11 o'clock. He also told him of our conversation prior to leaving London . Huzur was also amused. For me a bonus arose from that incident. From then on, a few minutes before 11 o'clock Huzoor would always say to me: "*It's nearly 11 o'clock; you can make a stop for your coffee.*"

On the very first day of my appointment as Private Secretary at Rabwah, Huzoor said to me: "*I also want you to be my driver.*" Therefore, during a period of eighteen months, whilst I was his Private Secretary I had the honour of driving his car. During that period, on one occasion, while I was driving his car, a member of his family was seated in the front next to me. As usual, Huzur and Begum Sahiba occupied the rear seats. The member of his family pointed out to me that the exterior of the car was covered in dust and that I should take care to see that it was clean. Huzur did not like this comment and addressing his relative, in a voice a little louder than usual, he said: It is a favour of the Imam Sahib that he drives my car. In fact, he is not a driver but my Private Secretary. Cleaning the car is not his responsibility. Others are employed for this purpose."

While I was his Private Secretary at Rabwah, with great hesitation, I said to him that I wished to invite him and Begum Sahiba for a dinner at my house but I was fully aware of my station. Huzoor replied instantly: "Why not? We will come to your house for a meal whenever you like." I was thrilled and a few days later I invited him, Begum Sahiba and some of their children for a meal at my house. My parents, a sister and her children were staying with me and they too participated in the get-together. Huzoor stayed until late at night and held a discussion on various subjects.

My residence was only a few paces from my office. He very kindly told me that my lunch would be sent to me from his residence. This routine remained in force for a period of eighteen months. At the exact time fixed for lunch my meal would be sent to my office. Once or twice, I humbly submitted that as my house was very close to my office there was really no need for my meal to be sent from his residence. He did not agree and until the day I left for England this practice continued.

After I had served as Private Secretary for a year and a half I was posted back to the U.K. Mission for the second time. Two days before my departure Huzur very graciously invited me to a dinner. He also invited members of the family of the Promised Messiah and some other dignitaries such as Nazirs and Wakeels. For me this was a great privilege and honour.

It is impossible for me to record the never-ending favours and love that I was the recipient of during those days. I have seen him from close quarters and I always found him to be God fearing, an arch lover of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, and a spiritual giant. His interior and exterior were identical. He was a very shy person. He habitually covered and concealed faults of others. He never kept a grievance in his heart for long. Forgiveness was his great quality. Throughout the time that I worked with him, his favours were showered upon me continuously. He would take care of my smallest needs. He would address me as 'Imam Rafiq' in an affectionate manner.

In all his European and American tours, he included me in his entourage. While meeting Heads of State and other important political figures he would always keep me with him. The treatment of Hadhrat Mansoora Begum Sahiba was of the same pattern. Her treatment to me was like that of a kind and benevolent mother.

A Memorable Journey to Islamabad .

During the summer of 1970 Huzur decided to go to Islamabad for a few months. As a Private Secretary it was my duty to supervise the arrangements for the journey. I consulted my staff and submitted a plan for the approval of Huzur. Generally the entourage consisted of his family, body guards, a cook, car drivers and a party of Khuddam volunteers. Duties were assigned to various heads of the departments and the main Jamaats on the way to Islamabad were informed. Huzur honoured me to drive his car throughout the journey. There were five or six other cars in the convoy. The route was planned and final approval of Huzur was taken. Seats on the cars and vans were allotted to members of the entourage in advance. We started early in the morning. Dignitaries

of the Jamaat, Officers of Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya and Thehriki Jadid and Khuddam leadership were present to bid farewell to Huzur. He led silent prayers before taking his seat in the car. Slogans of Allaho Akbar were raised. Our first stop was at a Government Rest House in the outskirts of Sargodha. This was my first chance to drive a car in Pakistan. I was used to English motorways and "A" roads. There were no markings on any road in Pakistan. The road passed through villages with a lot of hustle and bustle going on. I was following the English Highway Code and was hesitant in using the car horn. I would slow down near villages and towns lest there was an accident. Huzur noticed this and told me that in Pakistan people were used to the sound of horns. They do not look around them and cross roads without looking. They only stop when they hear the sound of the horn. Huzur said that by not blowing the horn you might cause an accident. From then on I started blowing the horn unfailingly and the road would be cleared!

Eventually we arrived at the guest house. There were around fifty members of Sargodha and surrounding Jamaats to welcome Huzur. They raised slogans of welcome and stood in a line. The Amir of Sargodha opened the door and Huzur stepped outside the car. He then shook the hands of all who were there. There were a few leafy trees in the compounds of the guest house. In the cool shade of these trees there were Charpoys (wooden cots) with large pillows. The fresh and fragrant air of the surrounding agricultural fields was refreshing. As it was hot the Jamaat had arranged sweet and salty Lassi (Butter milk) with plenty of ice. It was really refreshing. Huzur sat among his flock for about an hour and then the journey started onward once again. Our next stop was Kaller Khar, a scenic spot for travellers. The road now was hilly and zigzag. It looked much like a Scottish landscape. I enjoyed the scenery and the drive reminded me of the landscape of the Lake District in Cumbria, England. At Kaller Khar there were about forty Ahmadis waiting for the convoy. They had booked the beautiful guest house there. This guest house is on the banks of a large lake. It is said that this was one of the most beloved spot of the Mogul King Babur. He stayed there for a long time enjoying the lake and its beautiful surroundings. In my mind I thought that today another great Mogul was there enjoying the scenery.

It was now time for lunch. The jamaat had prepared a sumptuous lunch for this historic occasion. Huzur had his lunch with his flock outside in the garden of the Guest House. Delicious mango Ice cream prepared by an Ahmadi was served after the lunch. Huzoor was very happy and delighted to meet the members of the Jamaat. There was a short Question and Answer session after lunch. While the lunch was being served a few most beautiful peacocks landed near our tent. Huzur was told that there were a few dozen domesticated peacocks who roam about in these gardens. They never go away from there and are quite friendly with visitors. On the outskirts of the guest house there were orchards of a fruit tree called *Loquaat*. We bought a basket of this fruit. In the late afternoon we resumed our journey. Our next stop was Islamabad. The road now was wide and mostly a dual carriageway. Soon we were on the Grand Trunk Road which was very busy. In Pakistan it is not just motor vehicles on the road but there are *Tongas* (*horse drawn carriages*), four wheeled carts driven by bullocks, cycles and motor cycles and agricultural tractors.

Driving on such roads is a nightmare. We arrived in Islamabad in late evening. The Amir along with his executive committee was there to receive Huzur. In Islamabad he was also received by Sahibzada

Mirza Muzzaffar Ahmad (M.M.Ahmad). Jamaat had already rented a villa in Islamabad . We stayed with M.M. Ahmad Sahib for a few days and then shifted to the new location.

During this trip Huzoor met President Ayub Khan, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and President Yahya Khan. Ayub was spending his retired life in his palatial house on top of a hill in Islamabad .We stayed in Islamabad for about five months.On our return to Rabwah we took a different route. Huzur wanted to stop overnight at the residence of Sahibzada Mirza Munir Ahmad in Jhelum . Mirza Munir Ahmad Sahib, a grandson of the Promised Messiah had established a Chipboard factory there on the road side. It is a huge compound. Inside the enclosure is the residence of the owner Mirza Munir Ahmad. There is a beautifully laid garden of roses and other flowers and exotic trees in the compound of his residence. The entire compound is surrounded by a brick wall and is guarded round the clock by trained guards. Mirza Munir Ahmad, his sons and members of his staff received Huzur at the gate. Huzur and members of his family went in to take some rest.I had known the late Mirza Munir Ahmad for a long period of time. He was a good friend of mine. We had travelled all over Europe together twice and while in London we spent a lot of time together. Mirza Sahib was a loyal and a sincere friend, a polite and cheerful person and a true Moghul. He was generous and hospitable and brave. I miss his company a great deal.While Huzur was resting inside I had a good time to engage in conversation with Mirza Munir Ahmad. He showed me round his garden and factory. In the evening, members of the Jhelum Jamaat came to meet Huzur.

We stayed in Jhelum overnight and left the next day for Rabwah.

A Memorable Picnic at Ghora Gali

Once, Mr. M.M.Ahmad who was serving as a Federal Minister in the government of Pakistan suggested that Huzur should spend a few days at Ghora Gali Forest Rest House in the Murree Hills. He said he would reserve the guest house whenever Huzur wanted to go there.

Ghora Gali is situated 34 miles from Rawalpindi, at a height of 5,000 feet. In olden days when horse drawn vehicles used to operate between Rawalpindi and Murree the horses would be changed here, hence the name Ghora, meaning horse. The Forest Rest House is situated in the midst of picturesque surroundings. The views of lush green hills from the Rest House are stunning. The Rest House is quite spacious with servant quarters and is in a secluded area. During the summer months when the mercury shot up to 110 degrees on the plains, the cool and refreshing air of Ghora Gali breathed a new life in one's veins.

M.M. Ahmad Sahib reserved the Rest House for a week. All the preparations were made. A small party of Khuddam was sent in advance to make necessary arrangements. Kitchen staff and a few guards were also sent along with the Khuddam party.

We started at 11 am from Islamabad . M.M.Ahmad Sahib was leading the convoy in his chauffeur driven car. As usual I was driving Huzur's car.

I was very much familiar with the route as I had spent many summer months in Murree during my student days. My Khaloo (maternal uncle) Rustum Khan Khattak was holding a senior position in the Survey Department of Pakistan. He always invited me to Murree hill station where he had his summer residence. Murree was a charming retreat for me from the unbearable heat of Peshawar in summer months. I still cherish fond memories of those days. Rustum Khan Sahib was a poet of Pushto language.

I was deeply interested in Urdu poetry. There was an active Urdu Literary society in Murree. We were both honorary members of it. The society used to organize All Pakistan Urdu Poetry Sessions during summer. Poets of repute were invited to it.

Every afternoon I would go to the Mall Road for a walk and have afternoon tea at a restaurant called the Cecil Hotel. In those days all motor vehicle were prohibited on the Mall Road except the Governor of the Punjab 's official car.

One day I was sitting on a bench on the Mall when a smartly dressed old man sat next to me. He looked like an English gentleman with a hat and an umbrella. After a few minutes he asked me to introduce myself to him. I told him that I belonged to a small village called Mohib Banda in Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa. He asked me whether I knew Danishmand Khan there. I was surprised and told him that he was my father. He jumped from his seat and embraced me. He said, "Are you Bashir Ahmad Rafiq". I was stunned and amazed. He said he was Khan Bahadur Dilawar Khan, Ex Commissioner, and was a good friend of my father. He said he was an Ahmadi and knew that the elder son of Danishmand Khan had devoted his life for the cause of Islam and Ahmadiyyat. He then insisted that I should go with him to his villa in a picturesque part of Murree and have tea with him. I accepted his invitation and went with him to his palatial house in Kuldana, Murree. We had tea together.

He was recipient of true dreams and revelations, some of which he narrated to me. He was very happy to meet me as I was happy to meet him. He gave me his published Autobiography and asked me to meet him again.

Let me revert back to our trip to Ghora Gali. We arrived there around lunch time. Huzur occupied the main building of the Rest House while the other members of his staff were lodged in the Annexe. I was given a room inside the main building almost next to Huzur's Sitting room. We would bump into each other often as Huzur had to pass through my room to get out to the lawns.

There were beautifully laid lawns with flower beds in the precinct of the Rest House. Huzur would take a stroll in it in the afternoon. I alone was honoured by Huzur to accompany him and we would discuss various topics. Huzur told me some of his dreams and interpreted these to me. He used to be in a casual mood in Shalwar Kamees and bare headed.

Every morning after breakfast I would take instructions from him regarding reports received from all corners of the world. Once or twice he invited me to have lunch with him in his private dining room.

Very comfortable and relaxing times was had at Ghora Gali but throughout the affairs of the jamaat were never far from Hazur's mind. After a week we left to return to Rabwah after a thoroughly enjoyable break.

An Important Mission

In the summer of 1970 Huzur decided to spend a few months in Islamabad . I was instructed to plan the journey and make the necessary arrangements. This was my first trip to Islamabad with him. He also honoured me to drive his car.

We arrived at Islamabad and had a brief stay at M.M.Ahmad's spacious residence. The Jamaat had already acquired a large house for Huzur's stay there. This house comprised of the main building and a large annexe. Huzur occupied the main building while the Annexe was allotted to the Private Secretary and his staff. A separate portion of the house was assigned to Afsar Hifazat (Guards) and his staff. There was a large garden with lawns and flower beds.

As Huzur was unable to lead the prayer services due to a back injury I was appointed as Imam to lead the namaaz, which was a singular honour for me. Hazrat Mirza Munawar Ahmad (Hazur's younger brother) was also a member of the entourage as Huzur's personal physician.

The daily routine was that after Fajr Prayers, Dars of the Holy Quran was given each morning.Later an hour after the breakfast it was time for me to take Hazur's mail to his office. I would sit in front of him and would take notes of his instructions. This would continue until lunch time.

Huzoor was a cheerful disposition having a smile on his face all the time. He was magnanimous, was of cool temper and forgiving. I had never seen him losing his temper as long as I worked with him. He never ever raised his voice whilst talking with anyone in conversation.

There was a break between lunch and Asr prayers and we were free to do anything we wanted to do. After Asar Huzoor, Begum Sahiba and other members of his family would go for a drive in Islamabad . An escort was always provided by the Amir Sahib of Islamabad to lead our convoy. Once or twice we drove to the hill top called Shakkar Parian. The views of Islamabad were superb from there. The Jamaat arranged picnics there on a quiet side of the hill. Hazrat M.M. Ahmad also used to accompany us.

We would return home just before Maghreb Prayers. Huzur usually would sit amongst his flock for half an hour and would have frank discussion and exchange of views with them. He also answered their questions about any matter that they raised.

Dinner was served between Maghreb and Isha Prayers.After Isha prayers Huzur would meet important visitors and dignitaries for an hour or so. Among Non Ahmadi visitors at the time were Maulana Kausar Niazi who became Minister of Religious affairs later on, Ahmamad Nadeem Qasmi, a famous Scholar and a great prose and fiction writer, Saqib Zeervi Sb and some other poets of repute and many members of the Pakistan Parliament. It was my duty to welcome these important guests

and arrange their meeting with Huzur. I accompanied Huzur when he met and had long cordial discussions with the former President of Pakistan, Field Marshal Ayub Khan at his residence. Ayub Khan was a distinguished and gracious host who held the jamaat in great esteem. Because of our ethnic Pashtun background I too had long conversation with him and had the opportunity of meeting him separately at his residence.

It was during this visit that Hazrat M.M. Ahmad was stabbed by a crazed opponent of the jamaat and was admitted to hospital. Mercifully M.M. Ahmad survived this murderous attempt upon his life but it was a stark reminder of the further persecution was to be launched against the jamaat. Huzur's stay was prolonged due to this incidence.

One day a special meeting was called by Huzur. Hazrat M.M. Ahmad, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad and I were invited to it. M.M. Ahmad started the discussion by giving us the news that an appointment had been made for Huzur to meet the then President of Pakistan, General Yahya Khan. It was felt sensible not to advertise the meeting in case it drew any adverse reaction by opponents of the jamaat. The meeting was kept confidential even from the general members of the jamaat itself. The question was how Huzur would go to the Presidency without attracting any attention from the public on the road. If he went there followed by a convoy of cars with his body guards he would be spotted by people on the road. A long discussion took place. At the end Huzur decided that he would sit in a car in the front seat with his Private Secretary (myself) driving the car. Only one car with his body guards would follow at a distance of about 100 yards. It was also decided that a special route would be found where there were traffic signals at the minimum.

The next day I was given a route map and was instructed to have a trial drive with Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad sitting with me in the front. I drove on this route and found it quite convenient and with only a few traffic signals.

I was naturally very nervous as I was driving Huzur all alone. Huzur occupied the front seat and told me to be normal and relaxed. I drove the car towards the Presidency and was most surprised to find all the traffic lights green. There were no delays on the road and we arrived at the Presidency Gate. The body guards van stopped at a distance from us as it was not allowed inside. I opened the window and the Presidency Guard asked my name. He then opened the gate and told me to drive towards the main building where someone would receive us. In the main porch of the building an Army officer (Probably a Colonel) was waiting for us. I parked the car and opened the door for Huzur. The Army officer greeted Huzur and asked us to follow him inside. He took us to a plush sitting room and left us there. Huzur told me to accompany him to meet the President.

After a little while the Army officer came and asked us to follow him as the President was waiting to see Huzur. We were escorted to a larger sitting room where the President was standing to welcome Huzur. The President shook our hands and asked us to take a seat. Huzur then introduced me to the President in most kind words. He told him that I had been the Imam of the London Mosque for a long time and that I had worked there to his satisfaction. He also told him that I was a Pashtun. The President asked me whether I was a villager or belonged to Peshawar. I told him that I belonged to Mohib Banda and that I was a nephew of Sameen Jan Khan. The President had heard the name of my village and knew Sameen Jan Khan very well. He spoke to me in Pashto. He then asked me about

the rate of conversion to Islam in the United Kingdom to which I gave an appropriate reply. At this point as agreed with Hazur beforehand I begged leave of the President and was escorted by the Army office to a sitting room nearby. Coffee and other biscuits were served while we had lively discussion about Ahmadiyyat.

Through a glass window I saw Sardar Abdul Qayum,(Federal Interior Minister) with a Kashmiri delegation waiting to meet the President. The Officer told me that actually they had arrived before us but the President instructed that Huzur should be given preference. His meeting with the President lasted about forty five minutes.

Huzur came out of the room with the President who escorted him to the porch. He then shook our hands and left. I drove Huzur back home safely. Alhamdolillah.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III steered the jamaat through turbulent times. The break up of Pakistan followed by the 1974 disturbances in Pakistan that led to the notorious declaration of Ahmadis as non- Muslims caused immense upheaval and turmoil within the jamaat but all the time Hazur led the jamaat with steady hand on the tiller and without ever faltering. When he was asked to appear before the National Assembly of Pakistan to be cross examined about the beliefs of the jamaat he did not hesitate or flinch but went into the National Assembly and for 3 days withstood intense cross examination by no less than the Attorney General of Pakistan. He acquitted himself so well that to this day some 35 years later the government of Pakistan has refused to release the record of the proceedings of the Assembly.

He laid the foundation stone of the first mosque in Spain after a gap of 600 years near the town of Pedrobard in Andalucia. This was a significant and emotional event that after being banished from Spain following the Reconquista by King Ferdinand & Queen Isabella of Spain Muslims had been banished from Spain.

He also addressed the International Deliverance of the Cross Conference that I had the privilege of arranging at London's Royal Commonwealth Society. International speakers & scholars of note addressed the conference on the significance of the Holy Shroud of Turin and its proof that Jesus had not died on the cross as foretold by the Promised Messiah many years previously.

Hazur's 17 years of Khilafat were filled with immense achievements, but they also took a great toll upon his health and finally in 1982 whilst leading his jamaat in salat Hazur suffered a fatal heart attack and passed away, shortly thereafter. (Innna lillah wa inni illayhi Rajioon)



